

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Beechcraft 1900C, UB37, N27RA

Tonopah Air Force Auxiliary Airfield, Nevada

16 March 2004

On 16 March 2004 at 0401:50 PDT, a Beechcraft 1900C assigned to the Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB CA crashed on the Nevada Test and Training Range approximately seven miles southeast of Tonopah Air Force Auxiliary Airfield, Nevada. The mishap pilot and four passengers were fatally injured upon impact with the ground. The mishap aircraft was destroyed.

The mishap aircraft was flying a passenger transport mission, and was on the second of three flight segments. The aircraft took off at 0306L from home station transporting nineteen passengers and made an uneventful landing at the first stop over point. After discharging all but four passengers, the mishap aircraft took off at 0343L for Tonopah AF Auxiliary Airfield. Six and a half miles from the runway the mishap pilot reported the runway lights in sight, configured the aircraft and then initiated a visual circling maneuver to the right for a visual straight-in approach to runway 32.

During the descending turn, the mishap pilot most probably became incapacitated and was unable to continue flying the aircraft. Approximately halfway through the turn, the mishap aircraft began a gradual descent. At 0401:50L, three-fourths through the turn and approximately seven miles southeast of the airfield, the mishap aircraft impacted the ground. Upon impact the aircraft broke apart and released fuel that immediately engulfed the cockpit and cabin areas in fire and dense smoke. Escape and/or rescue of personnel from the mishap aircraft, given the prevailing conditions, was not possible.

There was clear and convincing evidence that the mishap pilot suffered incapacitation due to sudden cardiac death during the approach to land that resulted in the mishap aircraft impacting the ground. A substantially contributing factor was that the mishap pilot, in violation of federal policy and directives, willfully ingested inappropriate medications, suppressed significant medical information and deceived flight medical examiners in the presence of a deteriorating and dangerous health condition.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.